

"Throughout the forest, there is a scent, and everyone in the village is discussing it - Cinnamon"

True cinnamon, which is native to Sri Lanka, generally thrives well in the central highlands of Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, it is cultivated in areas such as Kandy, Matale, Haputale, and the Sinharaja forest region. In the Mullaitivu district, cinnamon is commonly grown in households, not for commercial purposes but as part of home gardening.

In this regard, cinnamon cultivation is successfully carried out at the district agricultural training center located in Oddusuddan of the Mullaitivu district agricultural department. Additionally, training sessions on the process of obtaining cinnamon bark are conducted for farmers. Quality cinnamon planting materials can be obtained here.

Cinnamon Cultivation

There are eight cinnamon species in Sri Lanka. Among them only *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* Blume is grown commercially. In tradition, there were 7 several types of cinnamon categorized based on taste of the bark. "Pani-Miris Kurundu" was the best with sweet-pungent taste.

Soils and Climatic needs

This plant can grow in different types of soils. Cinnamon cultivation requires very deep soil. Annual rainfall should be over 1700 millimeters, and the temperature should range between 25-32 degrees Celsius. Cinnamon is a plant that prefers full sunlight.

Wet zone is most suitable for cinnamon cultivation. However, it is also possible to cultivate it in intermediate and dry regions.

Crop establishment

Cinnamon is usually propagated by seeds in large scale. Vegetative propagation through stem cuttings is feasible. Well ripened seeds are selected, thoroughly washed to remove pericarp and plant in 12.5 x 20 cm poly bags. In polythene bags, sow 5 to 8 seeds. Retain 4 to 5 vigorous plants and discard the others to maintain proper spacing.

For field planting, the spacing between plants should be 120 × 90 cm. Planting should be carried out on set of monsoon rains. Prepare planting pits measuring 30 cm × 30 cm. Then, mix the top soil, cow dung and compost in equal proportions to prepare the media for the planting pits. Plant healthy, disease-free seedlings that are four months old in the pits.

Crop management

After harvesting, additional nutrients are required for the formation of new shoots, so it is necessary to apply compost. The recommended amount of fertilizer mixture is 900 kg / ha /yr. Compost should be applied twice a year and weeding should be done at 2-3 times a year. Every six months, the plants should be pruned and trained. The plant's stem should be kept long and straight.

How to process cinnamon bark at home?

Tools and Equipment Used



Knife



Kokaththa



Brass rod



Bark scraper

The cinnamon tree is ready for harvest three years after planting. It is possible to harvest twice a year.

Stems ready for harvest will have the following characteristics:

- The stem turns brown in color.
- The stem's diameter should be 3-5 cm.

Stems ready for harvest should be cut from the plant. Branches and leaves should be removed from the harvested stems. Next, the outer skin must be scraped off before peeling the inner bark. For this purpose, a special type of knife known as a 'Kokaththa' is used.

After scraping off the outer bark, the stem should be thoroughly rubbed and scraped using a brass rod. This process is carried out to loosen the bark from the stem.

When the bark is loosened, that can be easily separated from the stem without damaging that. Next, using a special type of knife, the bark should be scraped off the stem. The peeled barks should not be dried directly under sunlight; instead, they should be dried indoors, away from direct sunlight.

Note: The barks should be scraped from the stem on the same day the stem is harvested.

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